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April 10, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

On behalf of the constituents of Texas' 15th Congressional District, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of Veterans Affairs and thank you for your courageous service to our great nation during your time in the United States' Navy and in the Air Force Reserve. I know that under your leadership, the Department of Veterans Affairs will work diligently to address the pressing challenges faced by our nation's veterans, particularly in underserved communities like those in South Texas.

The state of Texas is home to over 1.5 million veterans, with over 27,000 residing in Texas-15 and the number growing yearly. Despite their sacrifices, these heroes have faced barriers and challenges in accessing the care and resources they have earned. Veterans in rural areas of South Texas, in particular, struggle with limited access to healthcare services and often endure lengthy travel to clinics or hospitals that provide VA services.

As you assume leadership of the Department, I respectfully urge you to prioritize the following initiatives:

- **Establishment of an additional VA clinic in the north of TX-15:** San Antonio, "Military City USA," hosts a tremendous amount of active and retired military personnel. Due to its proximity to San Antonio, the north of my district has an enormous number of veterans, and no VA clinic southeast of San Antonio to serve them. This means veterans in Guadalupe, Wilson, Karnes and Live Oak Counties must travel to the San Antonio area to visit a clinic, this trip can be anywhere from 50 to 60 miles. For veterans in the center of my district, the drive is further compounded.
- **Expansion of Mobile Medical Units (MMUs):** Veterans in rural and hard-to-reach areas often face significant obstacles in receiving timely medical care. By increasing the deployment and capabilities of mobile medical units, or by incentivizing clinics to share under-used MMUs, the VA can bring essential healthcare services directly to those who

need them most. This initiative would greatly benefit veterans and servicemembers who currently have to endure long travel distances for basic treatment.

As a proud advocate for the veteran community, I have taken several steps in furtherance of these goals. These efforts include:

- **January 11, 2024:** Sent a letter to former-Secretary Denis McDonough advocating for the establishment of a full-service VA hospital in South Texas to meet the growing healthcare needs of our veteran population.
- **April 6, 2024:** Met with Dr. Wendell Jones, VISN 17 Network Director, to discuss actionable solutions to improve healthcare delivery in the region.
- **July 30-31, 2024:** Toured the McAllen VA clinic and participated in leadership meetings with Valley Coastal Bend officials and stakeholders to identify gaps in services.
- **July 31, 2024:** Led Veteran Tele-Town Hall with former-Secretary McDonough, to have veterans directly voice their concerns.
- **December 18, 2024:** Engaged discussion about VA operations at the Audie Murphy VA Medical Center to ensure that TX-15 veterans are not overlooked in their policy considerations.

My request is to begin discussions, at a staff level, concerning the priorities of veterans in Texas's 15th district. Together we can take steps to better support the brave men and women who have served our nation.

Thank you for your service and dedication to America's heroes. I look forward to working together to bring swift action to these vital issues.

Sincerely,



Monica De La Cruz
Member of Congress
15th District of Texas